

***Allowable Subject Matter***

Claims 1-18 and 20 are allowed. For the purposes of Allowance, the original numbering of the claims has been changed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The general concept of directionally processing external sounds of a vehicle compartment so as to reproduce warning sounds to an operator of a vehicle within the compartment was known in the art at the time of the invention as evidenced by the Lehmann reference (US 6731204 B2). However, the Examiner has not found prior art that teaches or suggests the modification of Lehmann in order to provide a directional audio system that discriminates against noises generated by the host vehicle such that a gain of an audible part of the reproduced signals spectrum is automatically changed based on signal intensity in another part of the audible spectrum so as to make the operator less aware of sounds originating from the host vehicle such as road and tire noises, as defined in the independent claims 1 and 20. Other prior art has been cited herein regarding vehicle audio warning systems, however the other prior art of record also fails to teach or provide suggestion to arrive the combination of the elements and steps presented in the independent claims, again when said elements or steps are collectively considered in regards to each claim. For at least the reasons listed above, the dependent claims are also allowed in view of their respective dependencies upon the independent claims.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

***Conclusion***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Takahashi (US 5204971) discloses a vehicle sound system responsive to ambient noises.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JASON R. KURR whose telephone number is (571)272-0552. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 10:00am to 6:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vivian Chin can be reached on (571) 273-7848. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Jason R Kurr/  
Examiner, Art Unit 2614

/Vivian Chin/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614